YUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

STORY AND ART BY SHIN MASHIBA

9

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RETURN

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CONTENTS

The Fifty-Seventh Night... Reunion 003

The Fifty-Eighth Night... Memory 023

The Fifty-Ninth Night... Switch 047

The Sixtieth Night... Dream 073

The Sixty-First Night... Pity 097

The Sixty-Second Night... Door 121

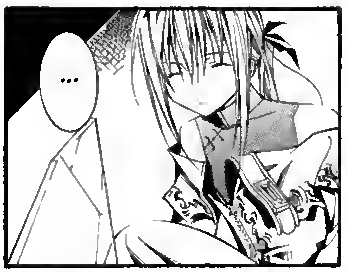
The Sixty-Third Night... Return 143

The Fifty-Seventh Night: Reunion

RIGHT, CHITOSE?
FINALLY! I'VE COME ACROSS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT HIS PAST.
...
CHITOSE, HUH...
YOU HAVE NEW INJURIES...
IS THAT CHITOSE?
OH, WERE YOU LONELY?

I SEE... YOU'RE SCARED AND IN PAIN...
... CHITOSE

THAT'S RIGHT. IF YOU SO DESIRE IT, WE CAN GO SOMEPLACE WHERE THAT DOLL OF YOURS WILL COME BACK TO LIFE...
HEY, THIS ISN'T A DOLL...


...

HEH HEH. I'VE FOUND SOMEONE THAT CAN LEAD ME TO HIM.
LEAD YOU...?
TUP

BUT YOU'RE SAYING HE'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE AGAIN?
YUP...

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME YOUR STORY AS WE WALK ALONG.

TELL ME ALL THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT CHITOSE ...

OH, DO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?
YES, HE TAKES CARE OF THE OWNER OF THE DELIRIUM.
OH HEY, IT'S SHIMA.
SO, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WELL...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF, BUT THERE WAS A VISITOR WHO SAYS SHE WANTS TO MAKE A DOLL MOVE.
BUT KAIRI SAYS HE CAN'T MAKE IT MOVE AND HE WON'T TAKE HER TO A ROOM.
THEN THE PERSON WHO CAME WITH HER SAID THAT WE SHOULD BRING THE REAL THING FROM THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
I WONDER WHO THIS PERSON IS...

THE PERSON WITH HER..! TSUKISHIRO!
WHAT IS HE...
HE'LL START TROUBLE EVEN IF WE IGNORE HIM..
CLATTER
HEY! ARE YOU GONNA GO?
BABAP
SOMEONE CALLED "CHITOSE."

THEY MIGHT BE CONNECTED TO THE PEOPLE IN YOUR PAST WHO ABUSED YOU SO BADLY THAT YOU WANTED TO GIVE UP ON BEING A HUMAN!
DON'T, IT'S DANGEROUS! IF THEY KNOW YOUR REAL NAME, THEN...!
SHUT UP...
IF YOU SEE THEM AGAIN—
SHUT UP.
IT WON'T DO IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HIRUKO.
THEN I'M COMING TOO.
...JUST A SUBSTITUTE FOR AZUSA.
I'M GOING TOO. I'D BE WORRIED IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU AGAIN...
HIRUKO IS STILL...
WON'T DO, HUH...

HIRUKO, IS THIS GUY ALSO...
妖鏡堂
OH, I'M JUST TAGGING ALONG. THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO CONFIRM AS WELL...
YES, HE'S THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO. SO WHY ARE YOU HERE?
SPEAKING OF WHICH, THERE'S SOMEBODY I WANT YOU TO MEET. IT TOOK ME A LOT OF TIME TO TRACK HER DOWN.

HEY, HOW MUCH LONGER AM I SUPPOSED TO WAIT?
CLACK
I HAVE TO LOOK GOOD IN FRONT OF MIZUKI! I'LL PROTECT HIRUKO!
YOU SAID IF I CAME HERE, YOU COULD BRING THIS BACK TO LIFE...
CHI...
...TOSE...
IT CAME TRUE! YOU CAN MOVE NOW.
THUNK

I'M SO GLAD...
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE BETTER NOW...
HUH? WHAT?
HA HA... THAT WENT WELL. SHE WON'T BE NEEDING THIS ANYMORE.

FLINCH
WHAT'S WRONG? HAVE YOU SUDDENLY FORGOTTEN? I WAS ALWAYS THERE AT YOUR SIDE FROM THE VERY MOMENT YOU WERE BROUGHT TO THAT STOREROOM...
...
WHO ARE YOU? WHY DO YOU KNOW MY REAL NAME...?
I DON'T REMEMBER... I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
!
?
IT'S ME, KASHINA.
KASHINA?
YOU WERE TREATED LIKE A RAG DOLL FOR YEARS AND YEARS... ENDURING CRUEL TORTURE FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT...
I UNDERSTAND... WHAT YOU ENDURED IN THAT STOREROOM MUST BE SOMETHING YOU DON'T EVER WANT TO RECALL AGAIN..

BUT, PLEASE... DON'T FORGET ME ALONG WITH THOSE MEMORIES!
YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS TO ME, CHITOSE...
BECAUSE I LIKE YOU, CHITOSE ...

THAT'S WHY I ALWAYS DID THIS...
ON SNOWY DAYS, I KEPT YOU WARM...
I TREATED YOUR WOUNDS EVERY DAY...
I WIPED YOUR BODY CLEAN...
AT NIGHT, I COULD ONLY WATCH OVER YOU FROM THE SHADOWS AS THEY HAD THEIR FUN ABUSING YOU.
I REALLY WANTED TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE ALL DAY, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME... THEY ONLY GAVE ME PERMISSION DURING THE DAY.
SOB

I'M SORRY... I'M SO SORRY...
SHE... SHE TOOK CARE OF CHITOSE...
THIS WARMTH ...
I DON'T REMEMBER THIS...
I DON'T KNOW YOU.
BUT YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW... I'LL WIPE AWAY ALL OF YOUR PAIN, CHITOSE...

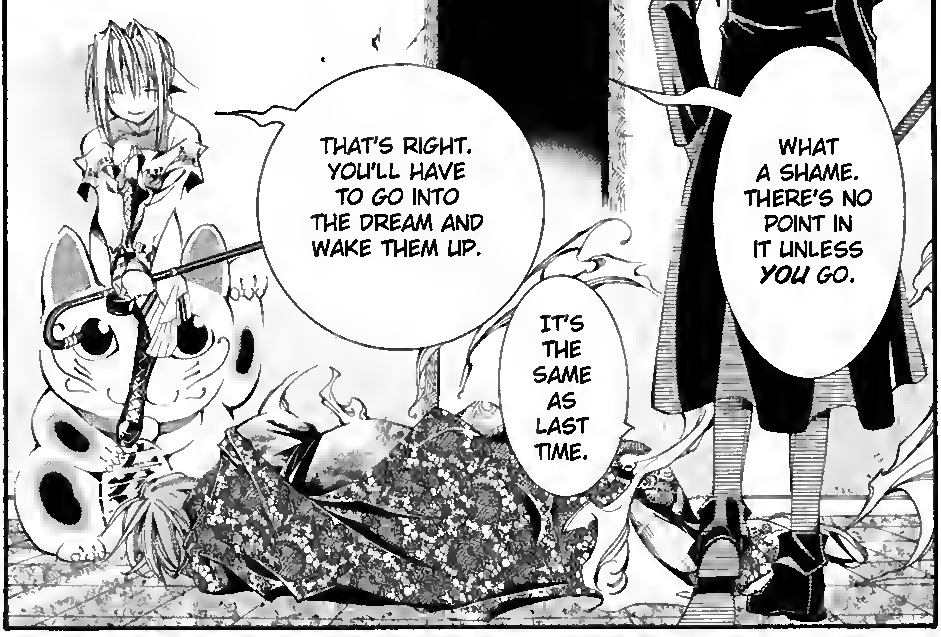
I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN YOU, NOT EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
I WAS ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE. I THOUGHT OF YOU SO MUCH I EVEN DREAMT OF YOU.
HEY, ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T KNOW HER?!
IF WHAT SHE SAYS IS TRUE, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE NOW IF IT WEREN'T FOR HER.
THEN, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A LOOK AT HER DREAM, HIRUKO?
WHAT?

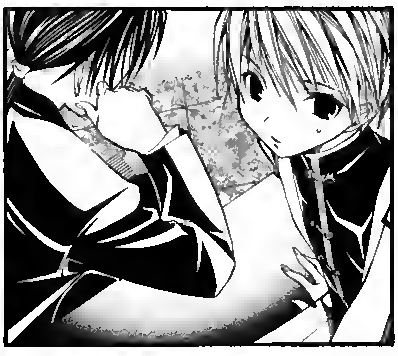
SHE CARED FOR YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART.
THAT'S WHY, WHEN SHE WAS SEPARATED FROM YOU, SHE TRANSFERRED HER FEELINGS FOR YOU TO THIS DOLL.

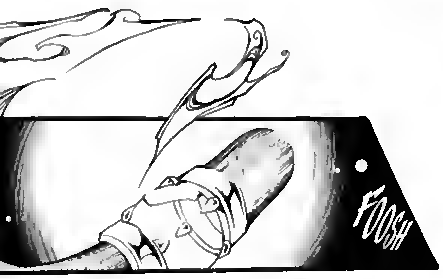
KASHINA PROBABLY KNOWS YOU BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF.
YOU CAN FIND OUT IN HER DREAM WHY PART OF YOUR MEMORIES ARE MISSING.

PART OF MY MEMORIES ARE MISSING...
I DON'T CARE.
WHAT? YOU'RE NOT CURIOUS ABOUT IT AT ALL?
NO. NOT AT ALL.

!
HIFUMI, GET AWAY FROM THAT GIRL!
THEN I GUESS YOUR FRIEND HERE WILL HAVE TO GO FIND OUT INSTEAD.
OH REALLY. AND HERE I WAS DOING YOU A FAVOR..
HUH?
SLEEP NOW ... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.


WHAT A SHAME. THERE'S NO POINT IN IT UNLESS YOU GO.
IT'S THE SAME AS LAST TIME.
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'LL HAVE TO GO INTO THE DREAM AND WAKE THEM UP.



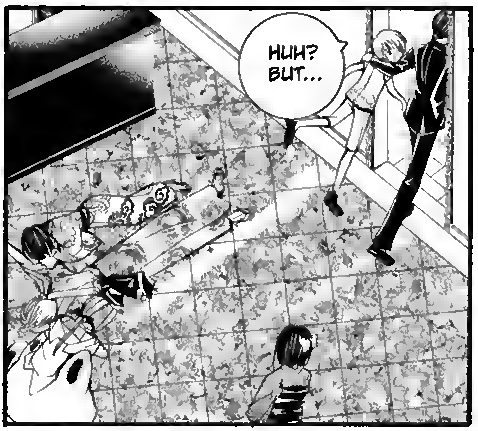


A DREAM ABOUT ME...

FINE THEN.
K-KAIRI, WHO IS THIS PERSON?! HE'S ROPED HIFUMI IN TOO!
SHIMA ...

THERE'S NO POINT IN GETTING INVOLVED RIGHT NOW.
CREAK
THAT'S ...

The Fifty-Eighth Night: Memory



LET'S WAIT FOR HIRUKO TO COME BACK TOGETHER.
THIS DREAM IS SHOWING KASHINA'S MEMORIES.
H-HIRUKO, THIS STORE-ROOM...
UH-HUH. MY PAST SELF IS HERE.
YOU HAVE NEW INJURIES.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A PRIZED TOY.

KASHINA ...
"YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS TO ME, CHITOSE..."
LET'S SEE HOW IT GOES... IF IT EASES HER PAINFUL MEMORIES...
IT'S OKAY.
MY OLDER SISTER WILL FIND ME SOONER OR LATER. SHE'S A BRAVE, KIND PERSON...
OLDER SISTER?!
IT MUST BE SO HARD TO EAT WITH YOUR TEETH LIKE THAT.
AS YOUR ONLY RELATIVE, I'M SURE SHE WILL.
BUT YOU'RE SO BATTERED.
WAITING FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU'LL SMILE AGAIN, CHITOSE...
I'M WAITING FOR THE DAY THAT YOU'LL BE REUNITED WITH YOUR SISTER TOO...

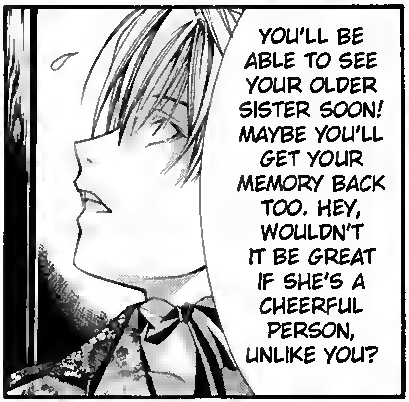
WHAT?! YOU HAVE AN OLDER SISTER?!
MY SISTER..
I DON'T REMEMBER..
HOW CAN YOU NOT REMEMBER? SHE'S YOUR ONLY RELATIVE, RIGHT?! THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG.
...
SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM THAT CAUSED HIM TO LOSE PART OF HIS MEMORY.
ANYWAY, IF YOU GO THROUGH THIS DREAM, MAYBE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MEET YOUR SISTER. YOUR BRAVE AND KIND SISTER..
I DON'T HAVE ANY SIBLINGS, SO I'M JEALOUS.
MY
...
...
SISTER
...

NO! I'M GOING TO STAY NEAR YOU!
YOU'RE NOT ALONE, CHITOSE.
IT'S TIME THEY WERE COMING GO NOW...
CREEAK
SO, WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TODAY?
RIP
RIP
AGH!
CREAK
SHE HAS TO. 'CAUSE THEY'RE IN THE SAME SITUATION.
HA HA... SHE SURE DOES A GOOD JOB TAKING CARE OF YOU.
FLINCH

Ha ha, he'd dine on feces!
YES, HOW EXCITING!
HMM... WE COULD BREAK HIS LIMBS AND THROW HIM IN THE SEPTIC TANK...
SWP
NGH...
AND IT'S SO FUN TO WATCH HIM SCREAM OUT IN PAIN.
AGH.
VANK
BUT THEN WE'D LOSE OUR FAVORITE TOY.
THIS SCENE...
!
YOU REMEMBER, DON'T YOU? THIS IS PART OF YOUR MEMORY, ISN'T IT?!
NO...

WHY DO I STILL HAVE THIS MEMORY...?

IT'S A NEW DAY. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...


YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR OLDER SISTER SOON! MAYBE YOU'LL GET YOUR MEMORY BACK TOO. HEY, WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF SHE'S A CHEERFUL PERSON, UNLIKE YOU?

I KEEP SEEING... FRIGHTENING DREAMS... I'M SO SCARED...
GU...
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING LATELY.
WHY? I THOUGHT THAT YOU ONLY DREAMED OF NICE THINGS WHENEVER YOU CLOSED YOUR EYES, RIGHT? YOU SEEMED SO HAPPY.
I'M SCARED... SO SCARED... PLEASE HELP ME, SISTER... PLEASE HURRY AND COME GET ME... SISTER...
UGH!
WHY...? WHY DO YOU CALL FOR YOUR SISTER?
I'M THE ONE WHO HAS CARED FOR YOU THE MOST, HAVEN'T I?!

I WOULD BECOME YOUR REPLACEMENT!
I'VE BEEN BY YOUR SIDE THE WHOLE TIME. I'VE WATCHED OVER YOU AS THEY TORTURED YOU, CHITOSE...
I WAS SO SCARED IT MADE MY HEART BEAT SO FAST. BUT IT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL...
SNIP
BEAUTI-FUL?
YOUR PARCHED SCREAMS, LIKE A FROG'S... YOUR BRUISED SKIN, TURNING INTO A ROTTING CRIMSON COLOR...
SNIP
BUT I NEED TO PATCH YOU UP...
SNIP
YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS TO ME. IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU...
I-IF YOU WERE TO DIE, CHITOSE... I... I...

THAT'S WHAT HER WORDS MEANT...
UHN... SISTER...
UH...
EVEN BEHIND HER SENSE OF GUILT, SHE'S STILL AFRAID OF THOSE MEN. SHE'S EVEN USING THAT DOLL AS A REPLACE-MENT FOR CHITOSE, TAKING CARE OF IT LIKE SHE DID HIM.
YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS TO ME CHITOSE
YOU SAID BEFORE THAT YOU'RE WAITING TO BE REUNITED WITH YOUR SISTER, RIGHT?
WELL, THERE'S NO NEED TO WAIT ANY MORE.
SHE HAD NO IDEA OF HOW MUCH YOU'VE SUFFERED, CHITOSE. THAT'S SO UNFAIR OF HER, ISN'T IT?
YOUR SISTER CAME BUT SHE WAS SAYING THAT SHE WOULD TAKE YOU HOME

SO I WANTED HER TO KNOW...
I TREATED HER THE SAME WAY YOU HAD BEEN TREATED. BUT SHE BROKE AND COMPLETELY CAME APART.
UGH...
UH...
HEY...
UH...
PLEASE SMILE...
AAAA

AAAAAAAAH
SHE CARED FOR CHITOSE, YET SHE KILLED HIS SISTER?! IS THAT WHY HE BLOCKED OUT PART OF HIS MEMORY?!

PLEASE HELP ME SISTER... HA HA! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT
MY MEMORIES... MY HEAD...!
IT'S SO MESSED UP...
HA HA...
UHN...
UHN...
DON'T THINK ABOUT KILLING YOURSELF.
WHAT? WHY HADN'T IT OCCURRED TO YOU UNTIL JUST NOW?
HIRUKO ?!
STOP IT! DON'T THINK ABOUT IT ANY MORE.
DON'T KNOW? BUT IT'S ALL MY FAULT!!

I NEVER QUESTIONED THINGS LIKE THAT.
I LIKE YOUR FACE BETTER THAT WAY...
WHEN WAS I BORN?
B-BUT! I REMEMBER THE OTHER STUFF...
UHN...
OTHER STUFF?
SHOW ME MORE...
UHN...
WHERE AM I FROM?
WAIT, I DON'T REMEMBER...
UHN...

I NEVER QUESTIONED THINGS LIKE THAT.
I LIKE YOUR FACE BETTER THAT WAY...
UHN...
WHEN WAS I BORN?
B-BUT! I REMEMBER THE OTHER STUFF...
OTHER STUFF?
SHOW ME MORE...
UHN...
UHN...
WHERE AM I FROM?
WAIT, I DON'T REMEMBER...

HA HA...
UHN...
IT'S SO MESSED UP...
MY MEMORIES... MY HEAD...!
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UHN...
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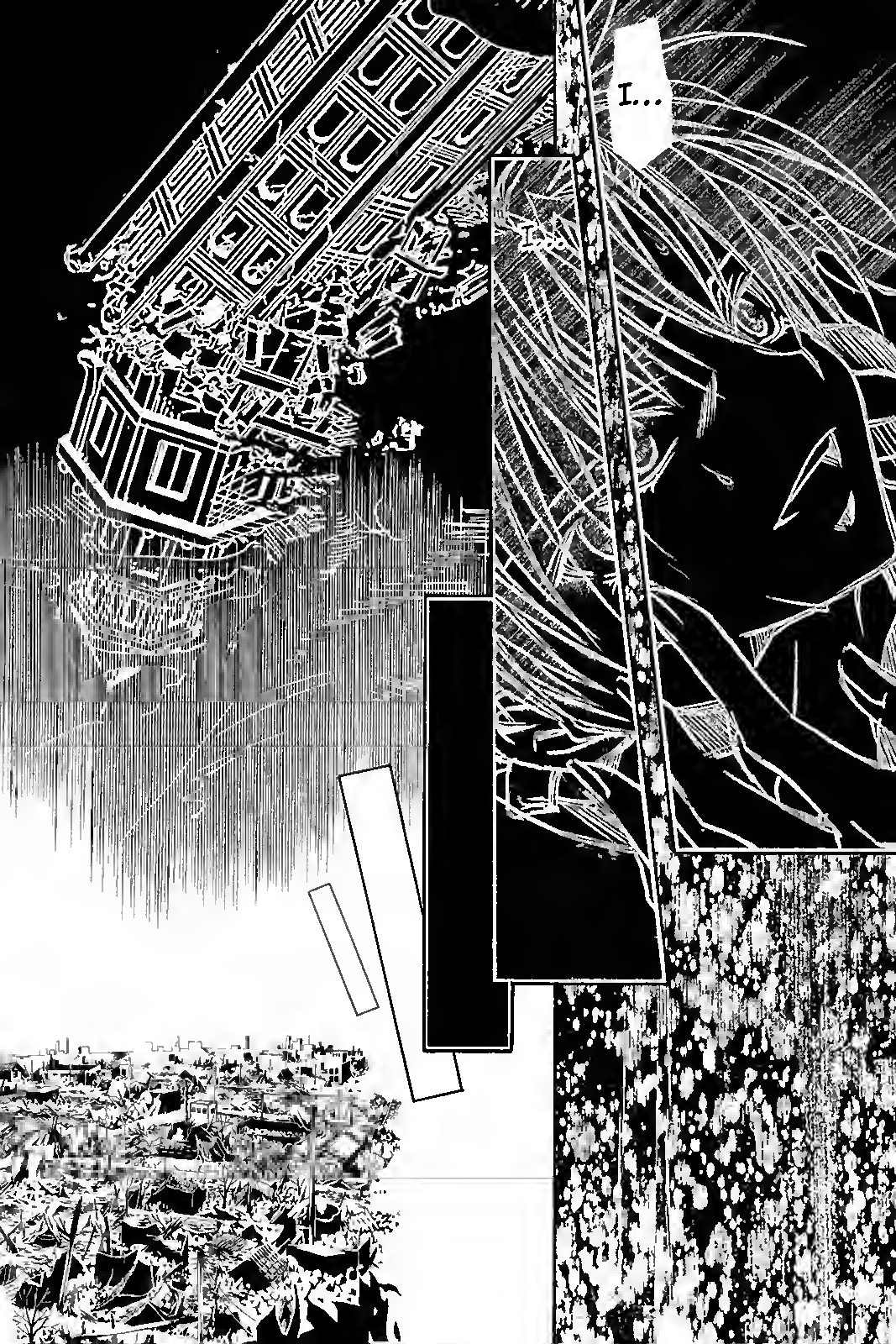
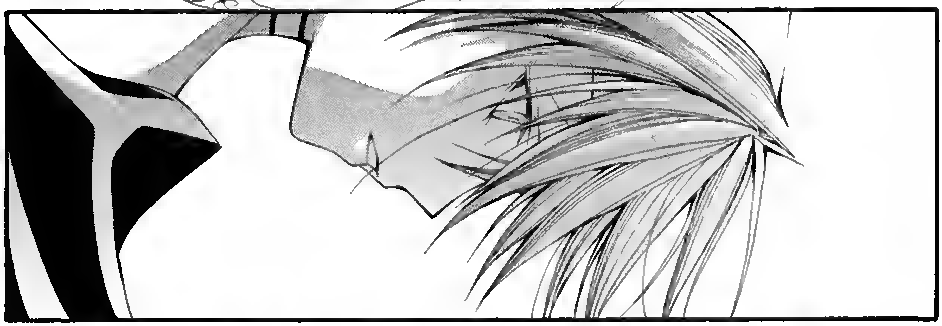

I...
I...

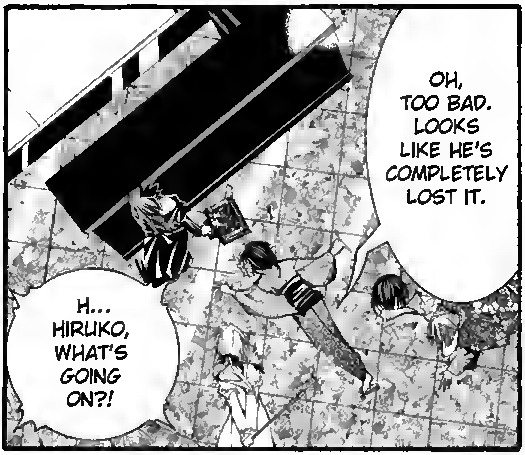
I'LL GO FIND SOME WATER. WAIT HERE.
THIS IS TWO YEARS AGO, AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE... SO KASHINA RESCUED CHITOSE FROM THE STOREHOUSE.
I'M FINE. YOU'RE AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER, CHITOSE.
I'M GLAD YOU WERE OKAY.
I'VE COME FOR YOU.
CLACK

OH...
I REMEMBER THIS SCENE...
AZUSA...
THEN WHY...
BARBMB

IF KASHINA WAS THERE TOO, THEN WHY...
...DON'T I REMEMBER HER?
BABUMP
WHY?
WHY?
BABUMP
WHY...?



HEY...


OH, TOO BAD. LOOKS LIKE HE'S COMPLETELY LOST IT.
H... HIRUKO, WHAT'S GOING ON?!

GIVE ME THE KEY THAT HIRUKO'S HIDING AND HIS CASE.
IF YOU DO AS I SAY, I'LL GRANT YOU YOUR WISH.
BUT...
GRIP
NO! DON'T DO IT, MIZUKI. YOU CAN'T TRUST SOME-BODY LIKE HIM!
HIS CASE?!
IT'S OKAY. IT'S JUST ME...
HIRUKO! YOU FOOL!

AZUSA'S INSIDE HERE!
THAT'S WHY YOU HAD BEEN HIDING IT FROM MIZUKI ALL THIS TIME!
UGH!
AZUSA DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER MIZUKI ANYMORE...
THINK

YOU'RE SO ANNOYING...
BUT YOU SHOULD ONLY ATTEMPT PLAYING THE HERO WHEN YOU ACTUALLY HAVE THE STRENGTH TO SAVE AT LEAST ONE PERSON'S LIFE.
AH...
AH...

TINK
WHICH YOU DON'T.

The Fifty-Ninth Night: Switch

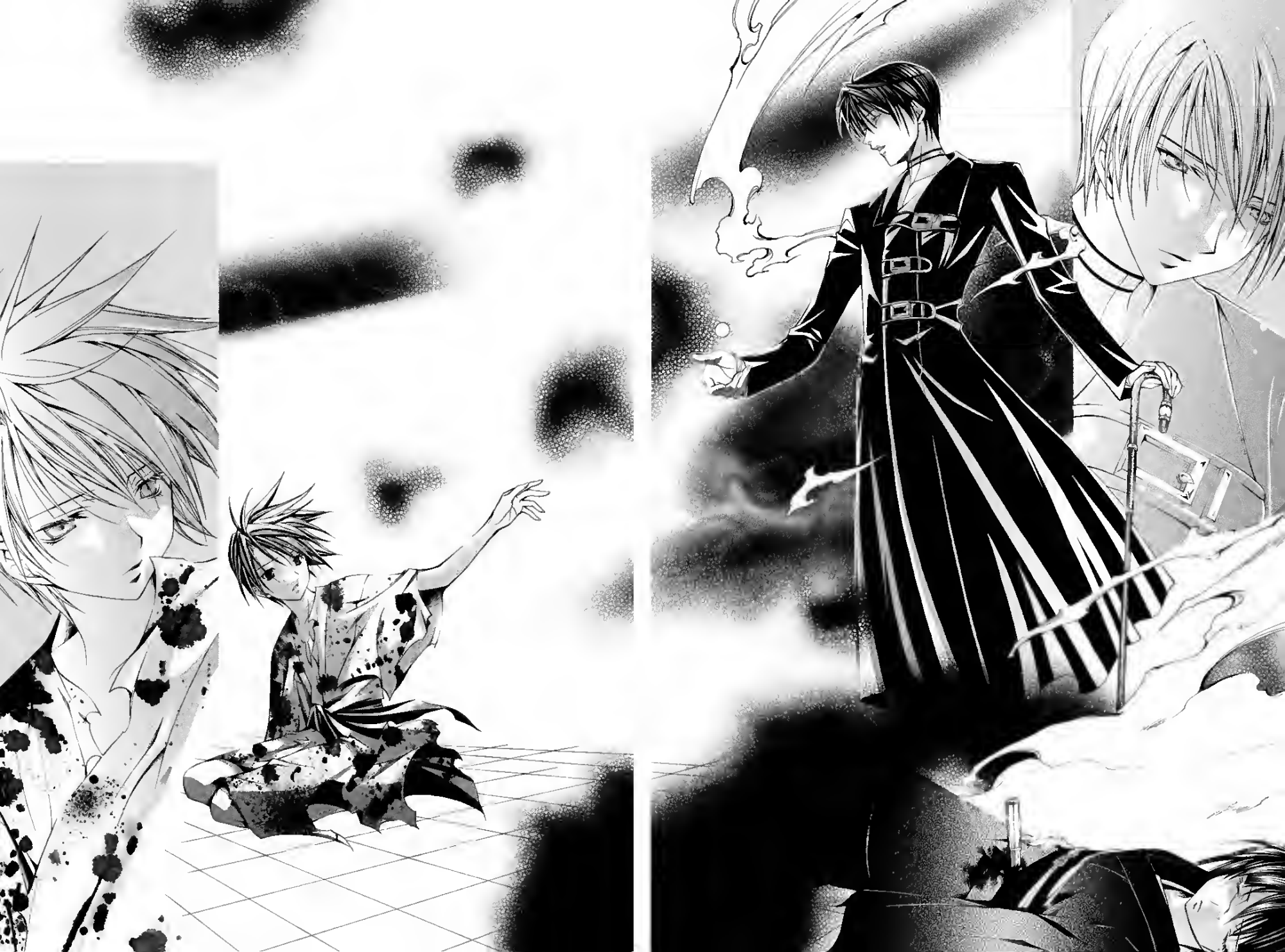
HMM, WHAT NOW? ONLY YOU CAN SAVE THIS GIRL, HIRUKO. DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE HER..
...IS TO PASS ON THE BAKU'S IMMORTALITY.

PASS ON?!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? IF HIRUKO DOES THAT, HE'LL DISAPPEAR LIKE THE FIRST BAKU!
WELL, IN THAT CASE, SAY GOODBYE TO THIS GIRL.
AGH...
A...
A...
I JUST NEEDED ONE REASON...
...TO DULL THE PAIN OF THOSE DAYS... A REASON TO LIVE...

IF I STILL CAN'T FIND A REASON...
...THEN SHE CAN BE THE REASON FOR ME.
IF THERE ISN'T ONE...
ONLY THOSE WHO SHARE THE SAME FEELINGS AS THE BAKU CAN BECOME A SUCCESSOR.
Kick
HOW NICE. BUT IT'S SO UNLIKE YOU.

AZUSA WILL COME BACK! BUT HE ISN'T THE SAME PERSON HE USED TO BE— HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT MIZUKI.
THIS! WAS THIS YOUR AIM ALL ALONG?!
THE NIGHTMARE SPHERE IS GLOWING...
SHE'S BEEN HOPING FOR HIS RETURN ALL THIS TIME. IF SHE FINDS OUT THE TRUTH...!
HIRUKO, DON'T DO IT!
PLEASE STOP!
I... I ALREADY KNOW. TSUKISHIRO TOLD ME.
?!
AND THAT HE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME TOO...
I ALREADY KNOW THAT AZUSA IS IN THERE
BUT WHY?

YOU KEPT ME IN THE DARK FOR YEARS OUT OF PITY!!
PAN
MIZUKI...
WHY DID YOU HIDE IT FROM ME THIS WHOLE TIME?! HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL?!
PANT
NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES!
I'LL FINALLY GET TO SEE AZUSA.
I WANTED TO SEE HIM ...
... FOR SO LONG ...
AND HE WAS RIGHT HERE THIS WHOLE TIME. SO CLOSE TO ME, AND YET...
FINALLY ...
PANT PANT
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW...



NO...!
I-IT'S HIM!
HE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK CHITOSE AWAY FROM ME THAT DAY!
NO...
AZUSA ...
PANT
PANT
CLATTER
OH MY...
THE AIR IS SO HEAVY...

IT'S THE DAYS THAT YOU DREAD THE MOST THAT ARRIVE SO SUDDENLY.
AND I WAS SO GRATEFUL TO YOU TOO...
CLACK
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT ME BACK TO THE REAL WORLD.
I'LL THANK YOU IN DUE TIME.
OH, YOU'LL THANK ME? HOW?
YOUR BODY CONTAINS THE COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES THAT THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO HAS EATEN OVER THE YEARS.
CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TASTE LIKE?

I HAD NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
SHIVER
HA HA. A BAKU EATING A BAKU?
CLACK
THAT'S GREAT. YOU REALLY ARE ON THE FRINGE.
CLACK
THE PEACEFULNESS OF THIS REALITY DOESN'T SUIT YOU.
SHOW ME THE WORLD THAT YOU DESIRE.
HIRUKO ...

DON'T YOU EVEN NOTICE HER?
MIZUKI IS RIGHT HERE.
YOUR SISTER...
AZUSA...
Ugh.
Ugh.
YOU MUST BE TIRED. BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE GIVEN ME WHAT I WANTED...
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
YOU DON'T NEED TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING FROM NOW ON, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
SO GO AHEAD AND REST.

DON'T GO ANYWHERE...

THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S BECAUSE I'VE BECOME HUMAN.
A DREAM... BUT NOT SOMEBODY ELSE'S, MINE...
KANOU HOSPITAL
BUT IT WASN'T A NIGHTMARE.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TRANSPIRED BETWEEN MIZUKI AND TSUKISHIRO, BUT SHE TRADED YOU FOR AZUSA.
SINCE YOU'RE NOT REALLY PASSING ON THE BAKU POSITION, JUST RETURNING IT BACK TO AZUSA, YOU WON'T DISAPPEAR.

I THOUGHT I WAS PROTECTING HER. BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MIZUKI REALLY FELT AND KEPT THE TRUTH FROM HER THIS WHOLE TIME...

I WISH HE HAD SAID SOMETHING TO HER!
WHY MUST SHE KEEP SUFFERING...!

CLENCH
UHN!

UHN.
UHN.

MY CONNECTION TO THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
...HAS DISAP-PEARED.
CREAK
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO FIND AZUSA!
UHN... SOB...
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? ARE YOU GOING BACK TO THE SILVER STAR?
HUH?
I... I'M NO LONGER A BAKU. I DON'T BELONG THERE ANYMORE.
?
GOODBYE.

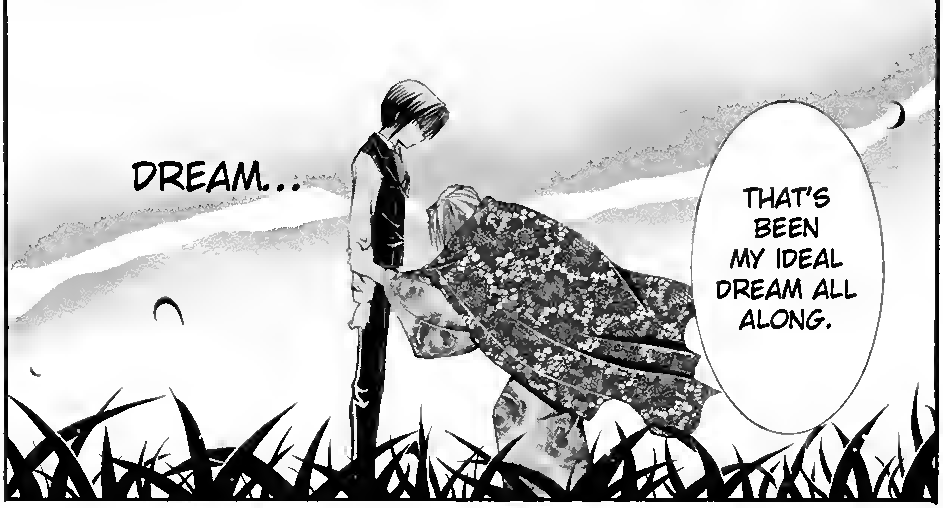
HE CAN'T ...!
HEY!
SLASH
SLASH
SLASH
IN THAT CASE, YOU HAVE NO REASON TO DIE EITHER.
BECAUSE YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE NO REASON TO LIVE.
COUGH
YOU'RE NOT EVEN TRYING TO STOP ME.

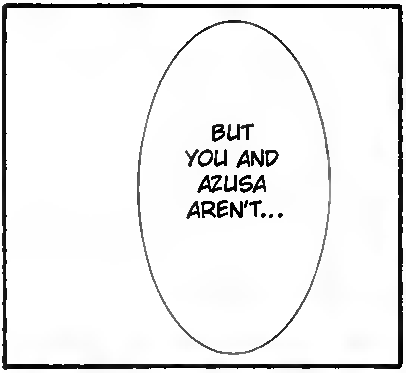
SNAP
COME WITH ME!!
HAIR SALON
湯
SIGN: BATH
甘味処
SIGN: SWEET SHOP
CLACK

Oh, he's never used chopsticks before.
Ah, he gave up!
C'MON, EAT IT!
EAT IT. YOU'RE NOT A BAKU ANYMORE, SO YOUR BODY SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT.
CLATTER
BLEGH!
IT TASTES HORRIBLE, DOESN'T IT? OUT OF ALL THE RESTAURANTS I'VE BEEN TO, THIS IS THE WORST.
DO YOU GET WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU?
BUT FROM NOW ON, YOU CAN EAT ANYTHING YOU WANT. EVERYTHING YOU TASTE WILL BE MUCH BETTER THAN THIS.
...

DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, FIND THINGS YOU LIKE, AND ENJOY THEM TO THE FULLEST.
YOU'RE NO LONGER SOMEBODY'S TOY OR BEING CONSUMED BY NIGHTMARES.
THEY NAMED YOU "CHITOSE" SO THAT YOU'D MAKE THE PERSON WHO NAMED YOU A THOUSAND TIMES HAPPIER. THEN...
CLATTER
FROM NOW ON, SMILE A THOUSAND TIMES FOR YOUR OWN SAKE.
BUT BY YOUR-SELF...
I CAN'T BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LIFE. TAKE CARE...
CLATCH
CAN'T YOU EVEN USE CHOPSTICKS ON YOUR OWN?!
CRASH

Hey...
IT WAS POINTLESS TRYING TO TEST YOU.
ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE MY LIFE WORSE?! I'M GOING TO MARRY MIZUKI! I'M GOING TO EAT FOOD THAT TASTES MUCH BETTER THAN THAT RESTAURANT AND DRINK THE MOST WONDERFUL COFFEE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
SHAKE SHAKE
BUT THAT HAPPINESS CAN'T BE COMPLETE IF THERE'S EVEN THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF GLOOM!
THAT'S WHY...!
WHY...
I'LL BE HAPPY...
NAAMU WILL HAVE BABIES...
MIZUKI WILL MAKE COFFEE...
AZUSA WILL COME BACK...
AND YOU'LL BE THERE SULKING WITH ENVY...


DREAM...
THAT'S BEEN MY IDEAL DREAM ALL ALONG.


BUT YOU AND AZUSA AREN'T...

THAT'S WHY... EVERYONE NEEDS TO... YOU HAVE TO... BE AT SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE LAUGHING...
BUT...

BUT YOU'RE KIND.

TSUKISHIRO WAS RIGHT. YOU'RE SO ANNOYING.
WHAT—?!

WHAT A STUPID DREAM. IT'S SO SELF-CENTERED AND FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS.

HA HA HA ...
...
HA HA HA ...
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?!
NOTHING.
YOU TOLD ME TO LAUGH.
HA HA HA HA ...
SHUT UP! DON'T FORCE YOURSELF TO LAUGH, IT'S CREEPING ME OUT!

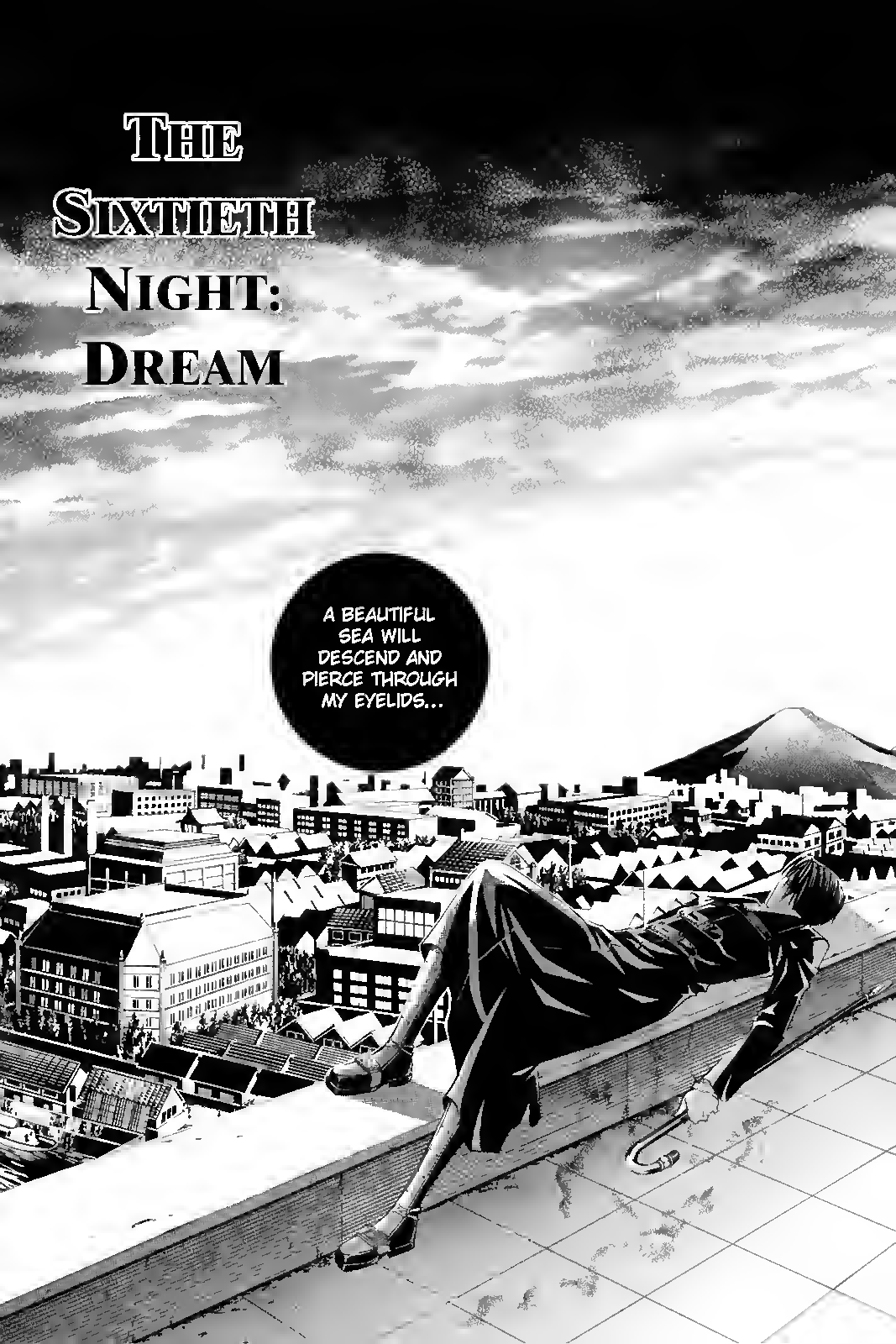
IN ANY CASE, JUST STAY PUT AT SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE. YOU SHOULD JUST BE CONTENT WITH THE LITTLE MORSELS OF HAPPINESS THAT I TOSS YOUR WAY.
JUST LAUGH FOR NOW...
HA HA HA HA HA.
SEE, WATCHING YOU MAKES ME SMILE. YOU SHOULD ONLY EXIST SO THAT I CAN CHARM EVERYONE WITH MY SMILE.
I'LL EXPERIENCE NEW THINGS ONE BY ONE...
THAT'S THE "REASON" YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!!
I WILL NO LONGER BE CONSUMED BY NIGHTMARES.
I HADN'T SEEN ANYTHING CLEARLY BEFORE.

I WONDER IF I'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY NOW?
WILL I FIND THE SAME KIND OF HAPPINESS AS HIFUMI?
HA HA...
HA HA HA...

NOTHING'S CHANGED... THIS PLACE IS SO BORING.
OH...
I WANT TO SEE IT...

A DARK SEA THAT DROWNS OUT THE SKY ...

The Sixtieth Night: Dream



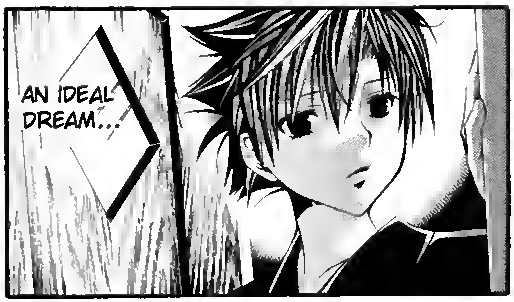
HA HA.
IT'S CHITOSE'S DREAM.. WHY AM I SEEING IT NOW?
CLATTER CLATTER
CLATTER CLATTER

OH, YOU'RE AWAKE. I'M GOING TO STAY OVERNIGHT AT THE HOSPITAL FROM TODAY SO I CAN BE BY MIZUKI'S BEDSIDE.
YOU'LL BE OKAY ON YOUR OWN, RIGHT?

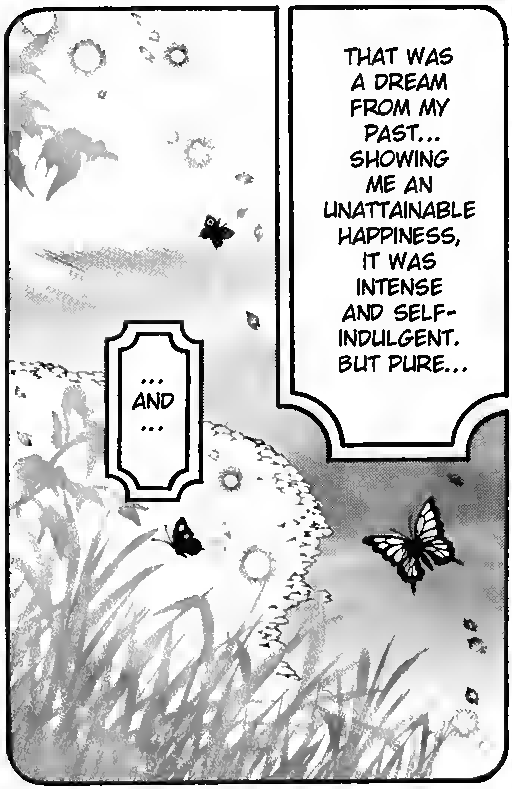
DON'T SHOW UP UNANNOUNCED, OKAY?
...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT...

DREAMS LIKE THE ONES I DESCRIBED TO YOU THE OTHER DAY... THEM COMING TRUE...

...
WHAT A CREEPY SMILE...
I'VE BEEN HAVING SOME WONDERFUL DREAMS LATELY.


AN IDEAL DREAM...

JUST LIKE MINE.


THAT WAS A DREAM FROM MY PAST... SHOWING ME AN UNATTAINABLE HAPPINESS, IT WAS INTENSE AND SELF-INDULGENT. BUT PURE...
... AND ...

NO, IT'S MORE THAN THAT...
THEY WERE INTENSE... SO INTENSE THAT IT WAS MORE CAPTIVATING THAN JUST A MERE DREAM.

SORRY, I'M IN A HURRY SINCE IT'S ABOUT TO START RAINING. USE THIS TO FEED YOURSELF AND NAAMU. BUY WHATEVER YOU WANT.
HIFUMI?
WEREN'T YOU GOING TO LOOK FOR AZUSA?
I'LL DO IT LATER.
...SCARY...

DISTORTED
...
IT'S DISTORTED
...
I CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER
...

UHN...
AGH!
AT THIS PACE...
LET'S TURN ON THE RADIO.
CHITOSE'S DREAM AGAIN. HOW MANY DAYS HAVE I SEEN THIS NOW? IT PROGRESSES A LITTLE MORE EACH DAY.
THERE HAVE BEEN FIRES IN OVER 30 LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT TOKYO...
AT THE MANSION, FOUR MEN AND WOMEN WERE FOUND STABBED TO DEATH...
SIX FATALITIES WITH TEN MORE PEOPLE SERIOUSLY INJURED WHEN A TRAIN DERAILED...
HIRUKO!

BAKU
YOU'RE A BAKU! DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE NIGHTMARES, OR ELSE I'LL—!
HUH? OH, MITSUBAYASHI FROM THE BATHHOUSE. I THOUGHT I LOOKED AT YOUR NIGHTMARE ALREADY...
...
THIS ONE IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT.
IT'S DESTROYING ME TO MY VERY CORE, TWISTING A KNIFE IN OLD WOUNDS.
IT'S ENCOURAGING ME TO ACT ON MY EVIL THOUGHTS.
AT FIRST, IT WAS A PERFECT DREAM...

MY LIFELONG DESIRE OF BEING IN THE MEN'S BATH CAME TRUE, AND I WAS ENJOYING IT WITH ELATION...
BUT...
WHEN I AWOKE, MY SEXIST FATHER OPPOSED MY INTENTIONS, AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MY DREAM BECAME MORE PRONOUNCED.
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REALITY AND MY DREAM BECAME MORE APPARENT...
THEN...
THE ABERRATION APPEARED IN MY DREAM.
AN ABER-RATION ...?
IN MY DREAM AN ABERRATION APPEARED. THERE WAS A RIVER, AND IT WAS PAST THAT...
UHN...
IT'S DARK... PLEASE HELP ME!
I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER THERE. BUT I'M GETTING SUCKED IN!
MY MEMORIES ARE GOING TO EXPLODE!!

I CUT OFF MY FATHER'S PRIVATES...
THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
PAST THE RIVER IT'S ALL DISTORTED.
IF THAT DISTORTION IS THE SAME AS WHAT I SAW...
...
HELP!
NO! HELP ME...
I DON'T WANT TO...
IF YOU'RE THERE, HELP ME WITH MY NIGHTMARES...
HELP ME...
THE RIVER...
THE DISTORTION...
MY MIND CONFUSED MY DREAM WITH REALITY...
BUT...
...STEAM TRAIN BURST INTO FLAMES, DOZENS OF PEOPLE ARE DEAD...
IT'S THE SAME FOR EVERYONE... THEY'RE ALL LOOKING AT THE DISTORTION... ALL OF THEM...
EVER SINCE THAT CLOUD SANK OVER THE CAPITAL...
BAM
THE CLOUD!
HE DESTROYED MY DREAM..
THE MOMENT I WAS BORN, MY EXISTENCE AS A WOMAN WAS COMPLETELY WIPED OUT IN HIS MIND!

I'M NOT THE ONE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!
I'M GOING TO BE PULLED INTO THAT NIGHT-MARE.
PLEASE HELP ME.
ARE YOU THE BAKU ...?
COULD THIS BE CHITOSE'S ...?
I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER THERE.
DISTORTION
A RIVER ... A QUIET ...

院内
MY...
MY DREAM...
WHY AM I...
IT'S TERMINAL ANYWAY...
HUH?
AS I STAND ON THE SOIL OF MY MOTHERLAND...
I'M USELESS...
THEN I'LL...
...RUNNING?
CLATTER
HIFUMI ?!
N-NO! STOP IT, HIFUMI!!

HIFUMI?
I'M FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY.
PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS ATTRACTED TO ME BECAUSE OF MY MONEY.
THE ONLY REASON I PUT UP WITH IT WAS BECAUSE I COULD AFFORD TO IN MY HEART, I KNEW I WAS DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE...
BUT THAT WAS SHALLOW OF ME. I IGNORED THE TRUE FEELINGS OF THE PEOPLE AROUND ME. AND BECAUSE OF THAT...
"YOU KEPT ME IN THE DARK FOR YEARS OUT OF PITY!!"
I MADE THE PERSON I LOVE THE MOST SUFFER BECAUSE OF IT.

A PERSON LIKE ME DOESN'T DESERVE TO HAVE MY DREAM COME TRUE!
THEN...
I WANT TO BE THE LAST THING YOU SEE!
I WANT MY IMAGE TO BE SCORCHED INTO YOUR EYES AND KEEP THEM FOR MYSELF!!

NO!!
WHAT AM I SAYING?! I DON'T MEAN ANY OF THESE THINGS!!
PLEASE... HELP ME!
THIS DISTORTION IS MAKING ME WEIRD!
I'M SO AFRAID OF THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT RIVER...
PAN
THE RIVER ...
PAN
THE RIVER ...
MY FANTASY DREAMSCAPE...
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT IT?! EVERYBODY HAS GONE MAD AND WON'T STOP TALKING ABOUT THE RIVER.
IT WAS THE IDEAL WORLD THAT I CREATED IN MY DREAMS WHEN I WAS BEING TORTURED IN THE STOREROOM, TO ESCAPE FROM REALITY...
BUT THE DIFFERENCE FROM REALITY WAS SO SEVERE THAT IT TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE.
AGH ...!

A DREAM MORE WONDERFUL AND CRUEL THAN ANYONE ELSE'S...
A DARK WORLD WHERE VIOLENCE, DECEPTION, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DEPRAVATION ARE NOTHING SPECIAL.
AZUSA, IN HIS QUEST TO KEEP THE NIGHTMARE GOING, WENT TO THE DELIRIUM TO MAKE IT A REALITY AND LOCKED HIMSELF IN WITH HIS DESIRES.
THE RIVER FLOWS TOWARD THE SEA...
BUT SINCE HE HAS REAPPEARED, AS THE OWNER OF THAT NIGHTMARE, SHOULD HE DECIDE TO MAKE IT COME TRUE...
THEN THIS NIGHTMARE THAT ENVELOPS THE CAPITAL IS MINE.

THE NIGHTMARE HAS GOUGED THE DREAMS AND HAS INTRUDED FROM THAT VOID...
ANY BOY WHO EVEN DARES TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF WHAT LIES THERE IS OVERWHELMED BY HIS DEEPEST DARKEST DESIRE.
THIS NIGHTMARE HAS BECOME REAL AND HAS NOW APPEARED TO CAST ITSELF UPON EVERYONE'S DREAMS.

I'VE BEEN OKAY... WITH THE PAIN I WAS IN AND WITH HIFUMI ACTING STRANGELY, I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING.
BUT...
YOU...
I SEE YOU'RE THE ROOT CAUSE OF IT ALL AGAIN.
SO, WHAT WILL YOU DO? IF IT GOES ON LIKE THIS...
YES...
IF NOTHING IS DONE, REALITY WILL BE OVERTAKEN BY MY NIGHTMARE.
TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. FOR NOW, ALL I CAN DO IS TRACK DOWN AZUSA.

DON'T! THAT'LL MAKE ME SLEEPY.
...
OW...
IN THAT CASE, I'M COMING TOO...
HEY, DO ME A FAVOR...
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. IF I SEE THAT NIGHTMARE ANY MORE, I'LL REALLY...
HEY, ARE YOU ASLEEP?
HIFUMI...
PLEASE TAKE MIZUKI TO SEE AZUSA.

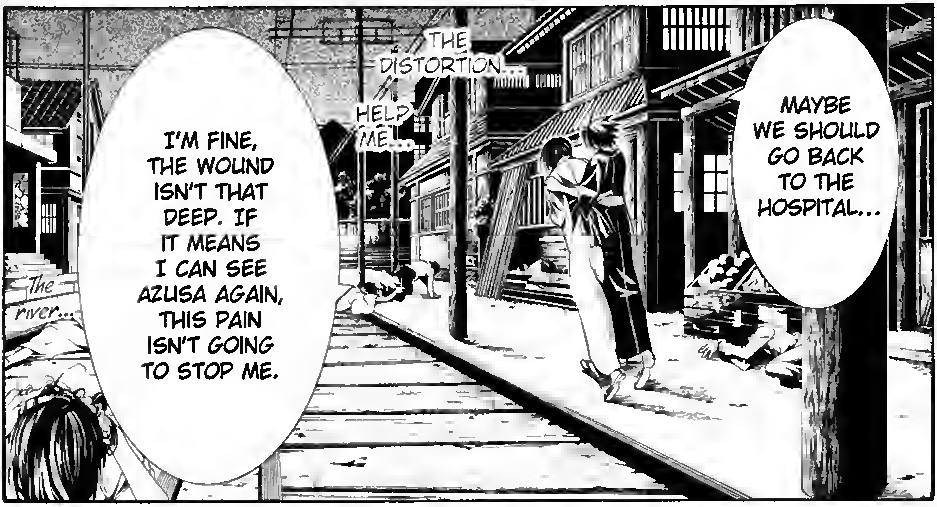
...SO THAT THIS IS NO LONGER MY BURDEN ALONE.
DEEP DOWN INSIDE, I'M GLAD THAT THIS HAPPENED...
JUST RUNNING ...
BUT I'VE JUST BEEN RUNNING FROM IT THIS WHOLE TIME...
THAT'S WHY...
UGH...
UH...
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT.
I HOPE YOU DIE.

HA HA HA HA! THIS IS FANTASTIC!
AGH...
IT'S POOLING..
IT'S SO DARK.
AGH...!
AH...
AH! THE RIVER
I CAN FEEL THE NIGHTMARES ECHOING EVEN FROM THIS DISTANCE!
OH!
I CAN'T STAND IT!
I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO CRY.

WELL THEN, WHY DON'T YOU GO OUTSIDE AND DINE A LITTLE?
I'D LIKE TO, BUT I PROMISED TO PROTECT CHITOSE...
※FANTASIZING
※FANTASIZING
CUT IT OUT!
OH! THERE'S A WINDUP SCREW ON TSUKI-SHIRO'S BACK!
CRASH
WELL, EVEN I CAN'T DENY THAT THE SITUATION PLEASES ME.
HA! THAT SOUNDS AWFULLY CHARITABLE OF YOU. WHAT YOU REALLY WANT IS TO KEEP THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE RIGHT NOW, ISN'T IT?
BUT...
THOSE THAT CAN'T HANDLE THE NIGHTMARES ANYMORE WILL BEGIN FANTASIZING...

CLACK
I DON'T CARE FOR YOUR UNSCRUPULOUS INDULGENCES.
I TOLD YOU I WAS GOING TO PROTECT CHITOSE...
HMM... SO YOU WON'T DO IT. WELL, I'M NOT BACKING DOWN EITHER.
...FROM YOU.

The Sixty-First Night: Pity


THE DISTORTION...
HELP ME...
The river...
I'M FINE, THE WOUND ISN'T THAT DEEP. IF IT MEANS I CAN SEE AZUSA AGAIN, THIS PAIN ISN'T GOING TO STOP ME.
MAYBE WE SHOULD GO BACK TO THE HOSPITAL...

THE VIEW FROM THAT CHAIR BELONGS TO YOU...
EVEN IF THAT HAPPENS, YOUR PLACE IS AT THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE.
THEN WHAT IS THIS EMOTION I FEEL?
I DON'T KNOW... I DON'T HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF FRIENDSHIP OR LOVE FOR YOU. BUT...
DOES IT MATTER? WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS.
IS THAT OUT OF PITY?
I DO WANT TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.

MY NIGHTMARE IS BECOMING A REALITY AND TAKING SHAPE...
THAT'S ...!
L-LOOK! THE SKY—!
THE RIVER IS!
THE RIVER... IF AZUSA IS BEHIND ALL THIS, HE SHOULD BE AT THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS...
OH, HOW ANNOYING...
THEN WHY DON'T YOU GUIDE ME TO THE ETERNAL SLEEP OF DEATH? BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS TO WIND YOU UP. ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE UP YOUR WORK?!
※FANTASIZING
YOU DON'T THINK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. YOU'RE NOT NORMAL.

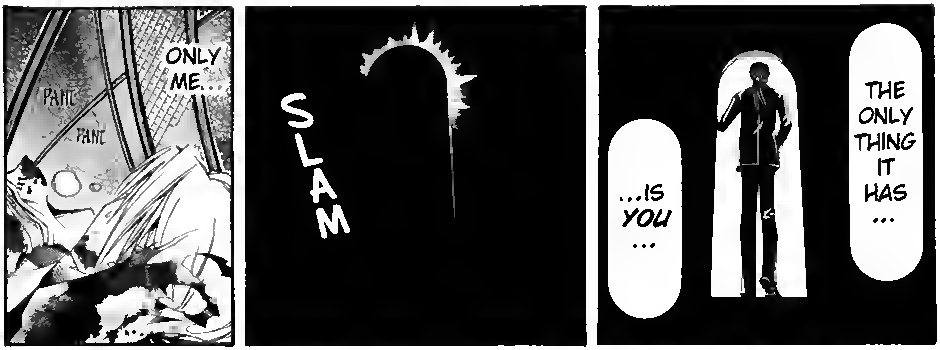
SMASH
YOU KNOW WHY I REMAINED HERE, RIGHT?
IF YOU REALLY WANTED TO FIX THIS SITUATION, THEN YOU WOULD UNLOCK *THAT ONE DOOR* IMMEDIATELY...
SINCE YOU'RE THE KEY.
YES, IT'S QUITE AN IMPORTANT DOOR.
THE FUTURE OF THE CAPITAL WILL BE DECIDED IN THERE.
IF YOU KNOW THAT MUCH ALREADY, THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO TO STOP YOU.
YOU PROBABLY ALREADY HAVE AN IDEA OF WHERE THIS DOOR IS, TOO.
CLACK
CLACK
OF COURSE ...

Ha ha... I wonder who?
It looks like somebody tried to hide the opening.
THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THE AIR IS DIFFERENT...
THE FUTURE OF THE CAPITAL WILL BE DECIDED IN THERE.
IF I CAN GET PAST KAIRI...
FOOSH!
FINE...
...THEN THIS WORLD WILL BE PLUNGED INTO INFINITE DARKNESS.
CLACK
CLACK
SWOOP

NO, THIS ISN'T WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR!!
W-WHAT'S THIS?!
?!
WE SHOULD PART WAYS HERE.
AND YOU WERE SO CLOSE TOO. BUT I CAN'T LET YOU MOVE AROUND FREELY. YOU'LL ONLY GET IN THE WAY.
CLACK
CLACK
YOUR BODY CONTAINS THE COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES THAT THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO HAS EATEN OVER THE YEARS...

AZUSA!
CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TASTE LIKE?
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
I'M GOING TO BE EATEN!
BUT, HOW...?
YOU'RE A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO EAT LIKE THIS.
ARGHHH!

UGH. MY ARM! A BAKU EATING A BAKU...
HA HA... THIS IS SO THRILLING!
PANIC
PANIC
TSUKISHIRO, THE DOOR YOU SEEK HAS ALREADY PASSED THROUGH MY HANDS AND CANNOT BE OPENED BY THE LIKES OF ME.
YOU ARE QUITE THE BAKU, AFTER ALL... YOU'RE EVEN ENJOYING THIS!
SIGH
THIS IS NEITHER A DREAM, NOR A REALITY, NOR A FANTASY.
THIS IS A VOID IN SPACE OPENED UP BY A LACK OF RATIONALE.


ONLY ME...
PANT
PANT
SLAM
THE ONLY THING IT HAS ...
...IS YOU ...

I PURSUED DEPRAVITY IN THE FORM OF NIGHT-MARES...
YOUR BODY CONTAINS THE COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES THAT THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO HAS EATEN OVER THE YEARS.
CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TASTE LIKE?
...AND WAS EVEN EXCITED BY AZUSA'S THREATS TOWARDS ME.

IS THIS VOID CAUSING MY INNER THOUGHTS TO COME OUT?
AGH!

A-
AZUSA...
AZUSA!
I'VE BEEN
WAITING...
...FOR
THIS DAY
FOR SO
LONG...

AZUSA... HAVE YOU REALLY FORGOTTEN ME?
WE SHARE SO MANY MEMORIES...
IT'S ME... IT'S MIZUKI. PLEASE, LOOK THIS WAY.
THERE'S SO MUCH I'VE WANTED TO SAY TO YOU. BUT NOTHING COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU'RE NOW IN FRONT OF ME...
PLEASE LOOK AT ME...
WHEN WE CONFUSED A MOTH WITH A BUTTERFLY AND LAUGHED SO HARD...
WHY WON'T HE LOOK AT ME?
WON'T YOU BE KIND TO ME ANYMORE?
YOU PATTED ME ON THE HEAD WHEN I CRIED...
SO...
I STILL HAVE IT NOW. I STILL THINK OF YOU.
I COULDN'T USE A HAIRPIN, SO YOU PUT A RIBBON IN MY HAIR.
AND I HAD SAID SUCH HORRIBLE THINGS TO YOU AND HIFUMI.
I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED ...

IT JUST MEANS YOU CARE THAT MUCH ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.
WHAT?
I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH IT HURTS TO NOT HAVE MY EXISTENCE ACKNOWLEDGED!!
DON'T YOU FEEL ANYTHING? EVEN WITH YOUR ONLY SISTER RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF YOU?
HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE WILL YOU MAKE SUFFER?
I'M SO SORRY...
I'M SO SORRY...
AZUSA...

THANK
BUT I DON'T NEED YOU ANYMORE...
...CHITOSE
STOMP
THANK YOU FOR THE LOVELY NIGHTMARE...

HURTING HIFUMI'S FEELINGS...
INVOLVING INNOCENT PEOPLE...
THAT'S NICE. BUT...
IF THIS IS MY NIGHTMARE, IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO PUT AN END TO THIS.
SWIP
AND BESIDES, I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS.
WHY IS PART OF MY MEMORY MISSING? AND WHY DON'T I REMEMBER KASHINA AT ALL?
IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY FEEL?
HEH
WHY WORRY ABOUT THEM? IF THOSE PEOPLE COMMITTED A CRIME IT'S BECAUSE THEY HAD HARBORED THAT EVIL INTENT ALREADY. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...

?!
YOU SHOULD KNOW!
KASHINA? WHO'S THAT?
SHE WAS THE GIRL WITH ME TWO YEARS AGO, AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.
SHE TOOK CARE OF ME DURING THE DAY IN THE STOREROOM.
SO YOU MUST REMEMBER HER AS WELL!
YOU REMEMBER SEEING ME?!
AH!
BAKUS ONLY LIKE THE NIGHT.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN STORIES THAT HAPPEN DURING THE DAY.

SHE WAS RIGHT THERE...
I DON'T KNOW.
IT'S TOO LATE.
HE'S COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING.
AZUSA WILL NEVER COME TO HIS SENSES!

GRIP
NO...
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THERE'S A WAY TO BRING THE CAPITAL BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS.
MIZUKI, LISTEN CAREFULLY ...

JUST TRUST ME.
WHAT... HOW CAN THAT—?
PLEASE ...
...
NOW, GO...

!
THERE'S SOMETHING I STILL NEED TO DO. I HAVE TO FIND THE REAL DOOR.
HOW CAN I GET OUT OF HERE?
I CAN'T ROT IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
ALL RIGHT. THEN...
I SEE... MY INNER FEELINGS...
MY THOUGHTS CAME TRUE.

TOO BAD... I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO EXPERIENCE BEING EATEN BY YOU.
A... AZUSA!
I WOULD MELT AND SUFFER AN EXCRUCIATING PAIN. AND THEN DISAPPEAR...
I WOULD BE ABSORBED BY YOU AS A NIGHTMARE AND NEVER BE ABLE TO COME BACK AGAIN.
OH, I WONDER WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO LOSE ONE'S BODY...
KLOOM
I-I'M MELTING.
SIZZZ

AH! I CAN'T ...!
AS A BAKU, I CAN'T CONTROL THIS EXCITEMENT.
I CAN'T DENY THIS EMOTION.
DAMMIT... IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL EITHER HAVE TO DESTROY MYSELF OR BE EATEN BY AZUSA.
JUST LIKE THIS...

JUST LIKE THIS...
JUST LIKE THIS...

HA HA.
IF I TRIED TO RUN AWAY, MY EMOTIONS WOULD BECOME A REALITY, SO THE SAME SCENARIO WOULD JUST REPLAY OVER AND OVER.
SO ALL I NEED TO DO IS LET MYSELF DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY...
THEN THAT ROOM WOULD DISAPPEAR TOO.
FINALLY... THIS CAPITAL IS BECOMING A LITTLE MORE INTERESTING!
IT'LL BE A BIG PROBLEM IF KAIRI GETS TO IT FIRST.
NOW THEN... LET'S FIND THE REAL DOOR.

The Sixty-Second Night: Door

MAKE UP YOUR MIND!
WHAK
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN CATEGORIZE IT LIKE THAT.
Sometimes it seems like a long time, sometimes it seems like a short time.
WAIT UP! YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS, RIGHT?! YOU'VE BEEN LIVING HERE THE WHOLE TIME.
CHITOSE, WHERE ARE YOU?
CHITOSE

IN THE PAST, WHEN HIRUKO LEFT THE KEY FOR HIS CASE IN THE ROOM, KAIRI CALLED IT A FOREIGN OBJECT AND MADE HIRUKO TAKE IT WITH HIM.
HE SAID IT DIDN'T SLEEP WHEN IT WAS LEFT BEHIND AND IT CREATED A DISTURBANCE.
...
WAAH! I REALLY DON'T KNOW. HE HASN'T TOLD ME WHERE IT IS...
UH...
HOW SAD. HE DOESN'T TRUST YOU... IT'S AWFUL HE WON'T TELL YOU ANYTHING.
FOREIGN OBJECTS?
I KNOW A LITTLE! KAIRI MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A KEY AND SAID THAT FOREIGN OBJECTS SHOULDN'T BE IN A ROOM.
FOREIGN OBJECT...
LEFT BEHIND...
DIDN'T SLEEP...

"TSUKISHIRO, THE DOOR YOU SEEK HAS ALREADY PASSED THROUGH MY HANDS AND CANNOT BE OPENED BY THE LIKES OF ME.
THIS IS A VOID IN SPACE OPENED UP BY A LACK OF RATIONALE."

OH, I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS.
HUH?
?
TAP
WHEN HUMANS CREATE SOMETHING, THEY THINK ABOUT HOW OTHER OBJECTS RELATE TO THEM.
IT USES THE PERSON IN THE ROOM'S FANTASY AND CREATES A REALITY OUT OF IT.
THE ROOM IS THE SAME WAY.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE ROOM HAS A CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S AS DEFINITE AS THAT, BUT IF KAIRI IS THE KEY, THEN HE CONTROLS WHEN THE ROOM IS AWAKE OR ASLEEP. IT'S KIND OF LIKE A BAKU.
BUT IF THE DOOR REMAINS OPEN WHILE THE FOREIGN OBJECT IS LEFT INSIDE...
THE OBJECT DOESN'T HAVE A MIND OF ITS OWN.
WITHOUT A FANTASY TO DRAW UPON, THE DOOR'S TRAIN OF THOUGHT WILL LOSE ITS DESTINATION...

...AND EVENTUALLY IT WILL REVERT BACK TOWARDS ITSELF...
IF KAIRI CAN'T OPEN IT EVEN THOUGH HE IS THE KEY, THEN THAT MEANS IT'S NO LONGER TAKING THE SHAPE OF A DOOR. AND IT PROBABLY...
IT'S PROBABLY FORGOTTEN THAT IT'S A DOOR...
THE ONLY INHABITANT OF THIS BUILDING BESIDES KAIRI IS YOU... WHY ARE YOU HERE? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?
?!
I...
I'M HERE BECAUSE I WAS HERE...
WHEN I NOTICED, IT WAS ALREADY THE NEXT DAY...
THAT'S ALL THERE IS!!
...AND HAS BEGUN FANTASIZING THAT IT IS A HUMAN.

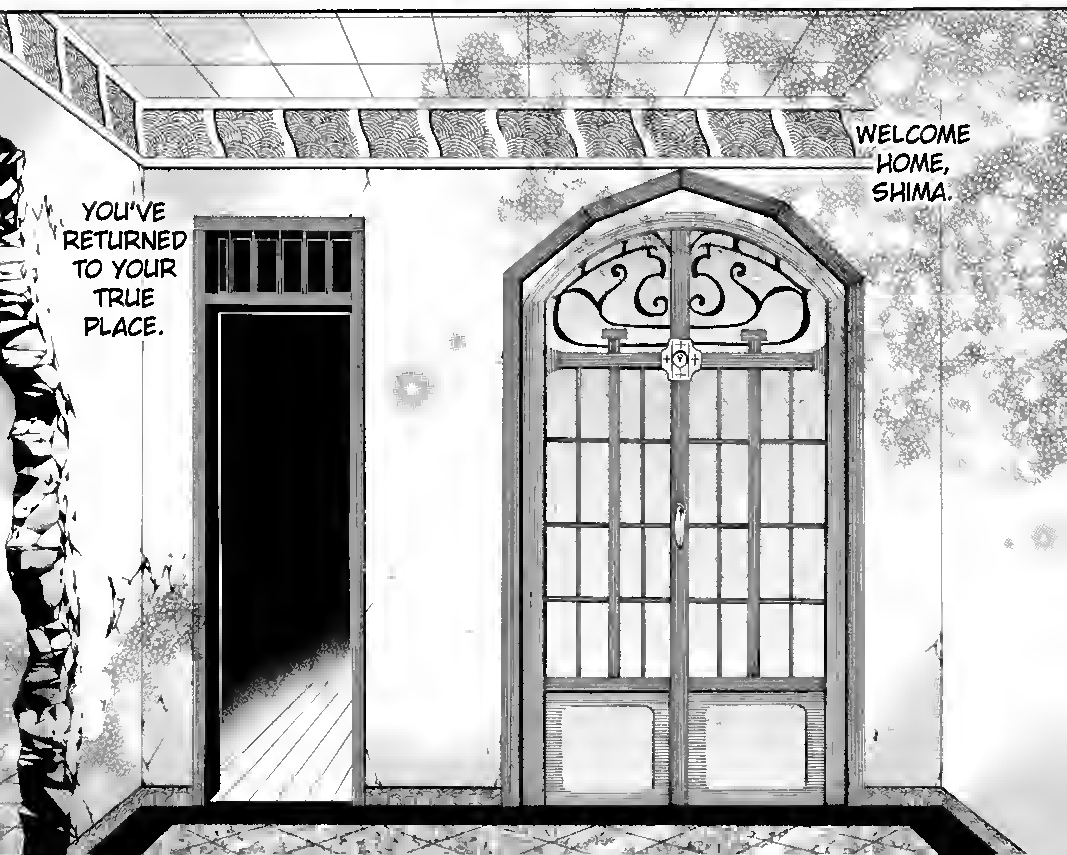
SLEEP. YOU'VE NEVER GONE TO SLEEP, HAVE YOU?
WHEN YOU NOTICED ?
JUST WHAT I THOUGHT.
YOU'RE LACKING SOMETHING CRUCIAL THAT SEPARATES ONE DAY FROM ANOTHER.
!!
THAT'S BECAUSE...
YOU ARE THE DOOR.

FOOSH
BUT THAT'S ALL OVER NOW. I'LL STOP THAT WAYWARD TRAIN OF THOUGHT RIGHT NOW.
NO...
YOU DON'T SLEEP, SO YOU CONTINUE TO FANTASIZE. YOU'VE FORGOTTEN YOUR TRUE PURPOSE AND BECOME HUMAN.
NO...
I CAN'T LEAVE KAIRI BEHIND!
AT THE SAME TIME, SINCE YOU LOST YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS AS A DOOR, IT'S NOW BECOME A VOID IN SPACE.
NO...
SLEEP NOW ...

KAIRI!
KAIRI...

TOO BA—
SHOK
HA HA... KAIRI WAS PROTECTING YOU BY NOT TELLING YOU THE TRUTH.
WHAT—?! MY BODY...
...CAN'T MOVE...
HEY...!
WHAT IS...
...GOING...
...ON...

CLICK



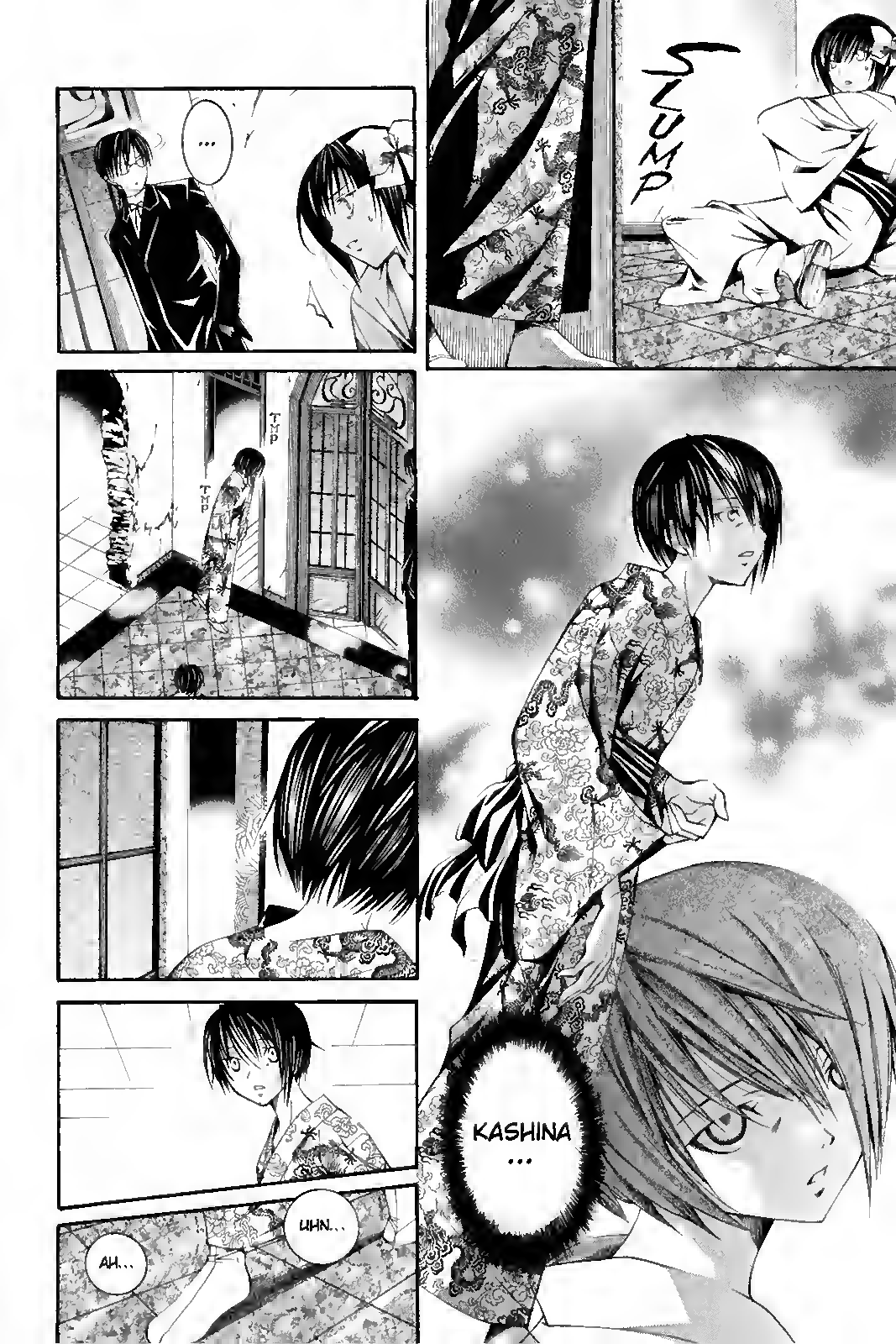
BUT SINCE YOU NEED TO BE WITH HIM WHILE HE SLEEPS, YOU HAVE NOW BECOME ONE WITH HIM...
THE ONLY THING THAT COULD HAVE TURNED SHIMA BACK INTO A DOOR WOULD HAVE BEEN A BAKU, SINCE THEY CONTROL SLEEP.
WELL, WELL... I NEVER IMAGINED YOU'D TAKE IT THIS FAR, TSUKISHIRO.
AS THE KEY THAT CONTROLS THE DOOR.

THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT SHIMA TO REMEMBER HIS TRUE SELF.
JUST AS YOU LOVE NIGHTMARES MORE THAN ANYTHING, I LOVE FANTASIES. BOTH ARE MORE PRECIOUS TO US THAN THE FATE OF THIS CITY.

BUT...
NOW IS NOT THE TIME.
THINGS HAVE CHANGED.
THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE IS NO LONGER IN OUR HANDS...
IF I TAKE YOU, THE KEY, OUT OF THE DOOR, IT WILL START FANTASIZING AGAIN. AND A NEW SHIMA WILL APPEAR.
IT WILL BE NOISY AGAIN.

!!!
UH... HIRUKO SENT ME HERE TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR STORY...
OH, DID HE NOW?
SO HIRUKO HAS CHARGED YOU WITH THIS RESPONSI-BILITY.
THE CHOICE IS YOURS.
AND IT WILL DECIDE YOURS AS WELL.
THE THING BEYOND THIS DOOR WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE CITY.

...
CLICK
CREAK
!!
WHAT...
...IS THAT?!


SLUMP
...
TMP
TMP
KASHINA
...
UHN...
AH...

HA
...
HA
HA
...
HEE
...
HA HA HA
...
NOOOOO!!
KASHINA
...
NO...

SHALL WE GO, THEN?

NIGHTMARES ARE FALLING FROM THE SEA.
AZUSA ...
THERE IS NO TIME LEFT.
I KNOW WHY PARTS OF MY MEMORY WERE MISSING, AND WHY I DIDN'T REMEMBER KASHINA.
I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING NOW.

IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T KNOW, AZUSA.
THAT'S RIGHT. IT WASN'T THAT YOU HAD FORGOTTEN.
TWO YEARS AGO, SHE WAS DEFINITELY THERE.
SHE WAS HIDDEN FROM YOUR VIEW BECAUSE OF THE RUBBLE.
THAT'S WHY SHE WASN'T IN YOUR MEMORY.
AND ...
...WHY SHE DIDN'T BECOME PART OF MY MEMORY, EITHER.

THE MEMORIES I HAVE ARE ONLY OF THE NIGHTTIME, WHEN I WAS BEING ABUSED.
"I HAVE NO INTEREST IN STORIES THAT HAPPEN DURING THE DAY."
"BAKUS ONLY LIKE THE NIGHT."
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER MEMORIES. I NEVER QUESTIONED WHY THAT WAS.
"SHE'S A BRAVE, KIND PERSON."
"THEY ONLY GAVE ME PERMISSION DURING THE DAY."
"AT NIGHT, I COULD ONLY WATCH OVER YOU FROM THE SHADOWS AS THEY HAD THEIR FUN ABUSING YOU."
EVERYTHING WAS CREATED BASED ON THE MEMORIES OF YOU AND THE FIRST BAKU.
NOR ABOUT KASHINA AND WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE DAY...
NOR ABOUT MY REAL SISTER...

DO YOU UNDER-STAND...
...WHAT THAT MEANS?
WOOSH

H-HIRUKO?!
WHY DOES THE DELIRIUM CONNECT TO HERE?

NO MORE... I...
I...
I CAN'T ...
BUT I CAN'T DO IT ANY-MORE ...
IN ORDER TO PROTECT MYSELF, I BELIEVED THE MEMORIES I MADE UP WERE REAL...
THAT THING BEYOND THAT DOOR IS THE ONE TRUTH I CANNOT RUN FROM
AND...
SEEING YOU AGAIN HAS MADE IT ALL COME BACK TO ME...
I'VE REMEMBERED EVERYTHING.

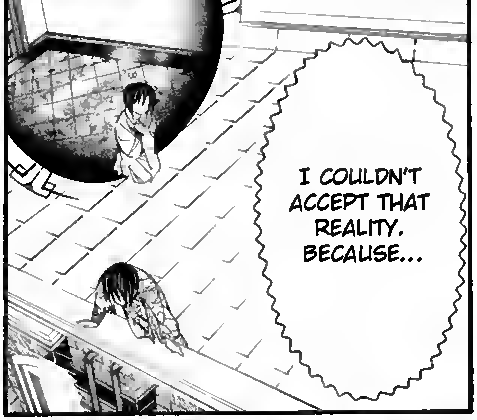
The Sixty-Third Night: Return

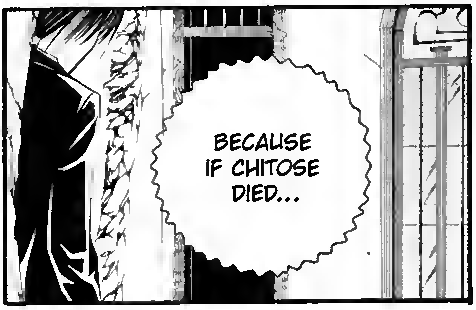
HOW FOOLISH I'VE BEEN. I'M ASHAMED OF MYSELF.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN LIBERATED AT THAT MOMENT...
...BUT I STOPPED TIME FOR MYSELF.
SINCE THAT DAY TWO YEARS AGO...

WH... WHO IS IT?! IS IT SOMEBODY FROM THE KUROSU FAMILY?
LET ME DIE...
YOU'RE NOT THE BAKU THAT I KNOW.
YOU WERE WATCHING OVER ME FROM AFAR IN REALITY AND CLOSE BY IN MY DREAMS. BUT...
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
...BECAUSE YOU ARE MY MEANS OF DESTRUCTION.
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE...
HA HA

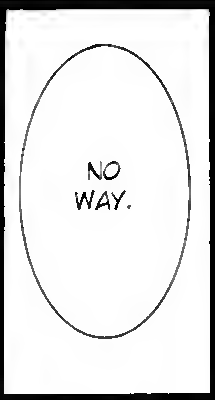
RUMBLE
THAT'S WHY I'VE COME FOR YOU
WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT? WHAT IS A BAKU?
RUMBL
AN AFTER-SHOCK!
CRACK
RUMBLE
CHITOSE!

H...
HIRUKO...! HIRUKO...
...ALREADY DIED THAT DAY TWO YEARS AGO.





I CAN'T EVER LET THAT HAPPEN...



I TOLD YOU THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, DIDN'T I? YOU ARE THE MEANS OF MY DESTRUCTION.
THE NIGHTMARE BORN FROM YOUR FANTASIES WAS SUPPOSED TO EAT ME, AND YOU WOULD BECOME THE NEW BAKU.
DON'T YOU GET IT? I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.
YOUR TRAGIC LIFE EXISTED FOR THIS DAY. YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED TO END IT FOR THIS PURPOSE.
YOUR DEMISE AS A HUMAN IS THE BEGINNING OF YOUR LIFE AS BAKU
AS LONG AS I EXIST, THERE IS NO OTHER POSSIBLE CONCLUSION FOR YOUR LIFE.

LET'S WELCOME YOUR DEMISE, AND THE ETERNITY BEYOND THAT.
LET'S GO.
THE DELIRIUM WILL MAKE IT COME TRUE.
AH... HEE HEE...
I AM HIM, AND HE IS ME.
CHITOSE IS SUPPOSED TO BE MY REPLACEMENT.
THERE IS NO LIFE THAT CAN END WITHOUT ME.
SEE...
ETERNITY...
ETERNITY...
SO...
I'LL GET SOME WATER AND WAIT FOR YOU.
... HE WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST TOO.
AS LONG AS I EXIST ...

I WAS LIKE AZUSA. I COULDN'T ACCEPT THE REALITY AND CLUNG TO HIS WORDS IN ORDER TO DELUDE MYSELF.
THE FEAR OF MY PAST...
...STAYED WITH ME...
...EVEN THOUGH MY TORMENTOR, KUROSU, IS NO LONGER HERE.
BY CLINGING TO THE ILLUSION THAT CHITOSE WAS STILL ALIVE...
BUT NOW I CAN SAY GOODBYE
I'M FREE NOW.
OF KUROSU... AND OF MY FANTASY.
FANTASY ...
HEH... I WAS FANTA-SIZING?
ONLY THOSE WHO HARBOR DELUSIONS AND FANTASIES CAN FIND THEIR WAY TO THE DELIRIUM.
IT ONLY APPEARS IN FRONT OF THOSE WHO ARE DELUDED.

YES, PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
"CHITOSE IS ALIVE AND IS HAVING THAT NIGHTMARE."
THAT DAY YOU SHUT OFF YOUR MEMORY AND BEGAN BELIEVING IN THAT FANTASY.
YOU THREW YOURSELF INTO THE NIGHTMARE THAT HAD BECOME A REALITY IN THAT ROOM.
ME?
I CREATED THIS NIGHTMARE?
AS FOR ME...

I'M JUST A FIG-MENT OF YOUR FAN-TASY.
HIRUKO IS AN INVENTION OF AZUSA'S IMAGINATION?
!

WAIT! BUT IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL—!
YOU'LL DISAP-PEAR TOO!
IF WE SHOW AZUSA WHAT LIES BEYOND THAT DOOR, THE NIGHTMARES AND EVIL THOUGHTS THAT HAVE CREPT INTO PEOPLE'S MINDS WILL GO AWAY.
!
BUT ONCE YOU REALIZE THAT YOU'RE FANTASIZING, THE REALITY CREATED BY IT WILL DISSIPATE, AND EVERYTHING WILL RETURN TO THE WAY IT USED TO BE.
"THE CHOICE IS YOURS."
"THE THING BEYOND THIS DOOR WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE CITY.
"AND IT WILL DECIDE YOURS AS WELL."
ARE YOU ASKING ME TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HIRUKO AND AZUSA?
I AM THE ONE WHO MUST CHOOSE.
MIZUKI, I REALIZED ...
...WHAT EMOTION I FELT FOR YOU.
YOUR IDEAL DREAM IS TO HAVE AZUSA BACK, ISN'T IT?
I WON'T STAND IN THE WAY.

WHEN AZUSA IMAGINED "CHITOSE," DETAILS LIKE HIS TRUE PERSONALITY WERE MISSING.
GRR
"YOU'RE JUST AS COLD AS THE LAST BAKU!"
SO THE MISSING PORTIONS WERE REPLACED BY AZUSA.
THE FEELINGS I HAD FOR YOU, MIZUKI, WERE AS MY YOUNGER SISTER.
I DON'T MIND IF I LOSE EVERYTHING FOR YOUR SAKE.
I'LL MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.
IF YOU CAN'T DO IT YOURSELF, I'LL DO IT FOR YOU.

I'M OPENING THE DOOR.
THE PERSON MIZUKI REALLY WANTS TO COMFORT HER...!
...ISN'T ME!
WAIT!
I'LL DO IT.
I CAN'T LET YOU DO SUCH A HORRIBLE THING.
I'M THE ONE WHO GETS TO CHOOSE.
THAT'S NOT YOUR CHOICE TO MAKE!
THIS CAN'T BE EASY FOR YOU!
IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO...
CRE...
CREAK

CHITOSE
...
AH...
TWO YEARS AGO...
THIS IS...
AH...
...
THE TRUTH
...

AIII

WASN'T IT YOUR INTENTION TO MAKE THE CORPSE DISAPPEAR?
SO THAT THIS FANTASY WOULD NEVER END?
CLICK
THAT WAS TOO BAD.
SO THAT I CAN SEE SHIMA AGAIN. MY BELOVED FANTASY...
HOW IDIOTIC!
WHY DID YOU FREE ME...?
ONCE YOU WAKE UP, FANTASIES JUST DISAPPEAR LIKE THEY NEVER HAPPENED.

HE HAS BEEN BUILDING UP PRECIOUS MEMORIES, ONE BY ONE.
THE FANTASY THAT YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN ON DID IN FACT EXIST HERE.
AND BESIDES, TSUKI-SHIRO...
Oh yeah.
AND WHO WAS THE ONE WHO WAS SO ENTRANCED BY THE FANTASY THAT THEY FELL FOR IT?
PRE-CIOUS...
I DON'T HAVE...
...ANY-THING LIKE THAT.
THAT'S WHY...
EVEN IF I HAD, I WOULD HAVE THROWN THEM ALL AWAY TO BECOME A BAKU.
I WOULDN'T HAVE MINDED IF I HAD REMAINED THE KEY.

CHITOSE AND THAT NIGHTMARE ...
I CREATED THEM ALL...
A FANTASY ...
I PURSUED SELF-DESTRUCTION BECAUSE I DESPISED BEING HUMAN AND THE EMPTINESS OF BEING A BAKU...
AND THIS IS WHAT RESULTED.
IN THE END, THERE'S NO PLACE FOR ME.
SQUEEZE
THUD

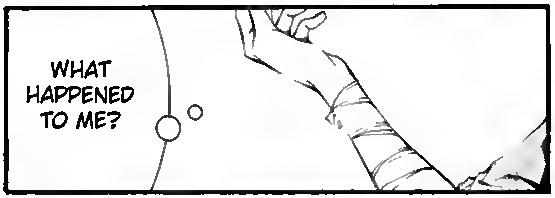
THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
HAVING TROUBLE PUTTING IT IN YOUR HAIR?
THE PLACE WHERE I BELONG...

THIS LOOKS BETTER ON YOU MI...
THE PLACE WHERE I WAS WELCOME...
MI...
...KI...
MIZU...
...KI...
FINALLY...

YOU'RE BACK!
AZUSA!
HIRUKO, AZUSA REMEMBERED ...!

THE SKY...
MY BODY...
IT FEELS SO LIGHT...

I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE!


WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?

I SAID SUCH AWFUL THINGS TO MIZUKI AND HIRUKO...

I'M...
YOU'RE BACK.
HIRUKO
...
I'M SO SORRY!
I REALLY DIDN'T MEAN IT WHEN I TOLD YOU TO DIE!
THAT WAS—
IT'S ALL OVER.
HUH?

YES, IT WAS ALL SUPPOSED TO HAVE ENDED THAT DAY...
CHITOSE'S LIFE...
BUT AZUSA GAVE ME AN ADDITIONAL TWO YEARS.
THAT'S WHY I WAS ABLE TO COME TO SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
PLEASE, DON'T EVER LEAVE ME AGAIN...

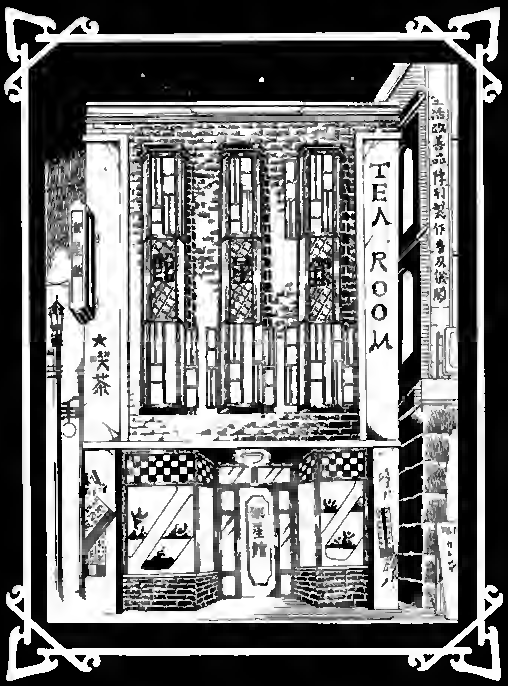
HIFUMI, YOU SHOWED ME SO MANY THINGS...
AND NOW, THOSE DREAMS YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THAT SEEMED SO SILLY AT THE TIME...
WHAT?! HIRUKO?!
HIS BODY ...!
MIZUKI GAVE ME THE VIEW FROM THIS CHAIR...
THE THINGS THAT HIRUKO GAVE ME...

STRANGELY, I CHERISH THEM NOW...
THIS MOMENT THAT I HAD WAITED SO LONG FOR...
CHITOSE, FOR WHOM LIFE WAS SUPPOSED TO END WITHOUT A SINGLE HAPPINESS...
...WAS GIVEN SO MANY...

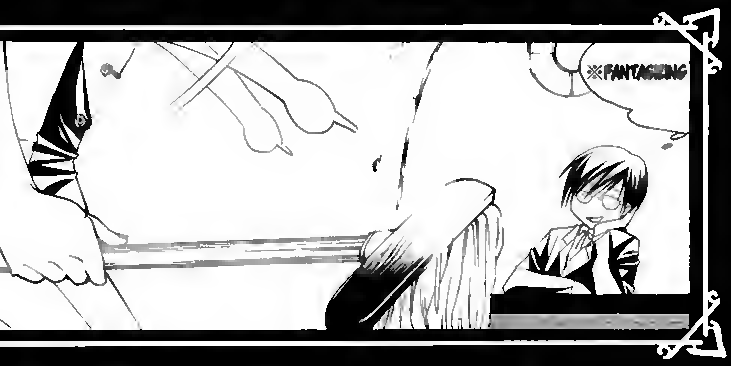
NOW, I HAVE SOMETHING TO LOSE.
SO NOW ...

UNDER COVER
OF DARKNESS...

THEY CAME TO
THE SILVER STAR
TEA HOUSE...



...SEEKING SOLACE...



THE DARKNESS OF THOSE DAYS ARE NOWHERE TO BE SEEN

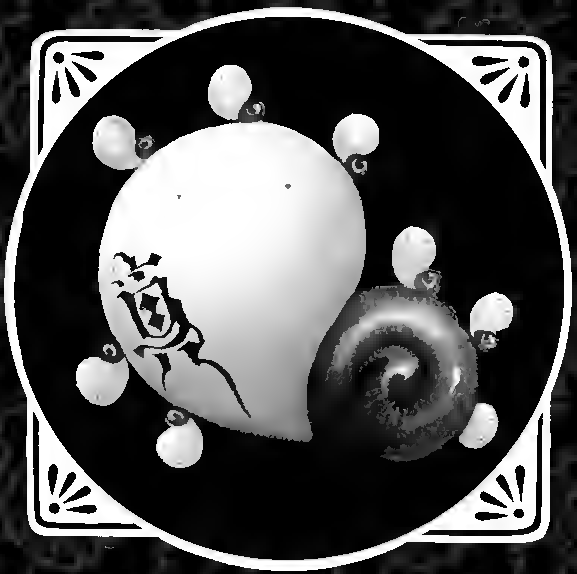
NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR 9: END

ASSISTANTS

Wanwan Shiroi	◇In charge of inking blacks and screen tones
Neema	◇In charge of backgrounds and shadow tones
Katsumi Arai	◇In charge of frames
MOAI	◇Moral support

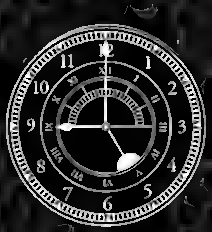
Everyone that was involved with making this book
<Everyone at Square Enix>

All of our readers...



SHIN MASHIBA

Thank you, everyone, for all your support!



Shin Mashiba's first manga, *Yumekui Kenbun* (Nightmare Inspector), premiered in *Monthly Stencil*, a shojo magazine, in December 2001 and was then serialized in *Monthly G Fantasy* from 2003 to 2007. Mashiba-san's own nightmares include being forced to eat 50 living slugs and being chased by time.

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR: YUMEKUI KENBUN ⑨

Shin Mashiba

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